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EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Presidential Candidates.

From the N. Y. Citizen. The selection of the administration for the next four years is the work of paramount importance before the country. The elements for exploitation by political adventurers have largely increased in the last few years, and we may be sure that the class of noisy, unprincipled demagogues who lie in wait for opportunities to make capital will not overlook them. To begin with, there is the large class of negro voters in the reconstructed States, some half million in number, and controlling absolutely some of those States. These voters, as a body, are precisely of the sort that can be reached by the most vulgar arts. Naturally susceptible to delusions of the imagination, and stimulated by the wonderful changes of the last six years to a pitch of excitement and expectation that steps at nothing, they are open to any sort of imposition, and those who bid highest will carry the mass of them in any extravaganza. A few years of education and the self-command acquired in the exercise of manhood rights will correct this; but it is an element of present trouble, if not of danger.

There is also, all through the North, a large class, unsettled as yet in their purposes and pursuits since the war, open to appeals to apparent self-interest which may lie in the direction of disorder, and disposed to extravagance of thought and of action.

The entire laboring population of the country is in an uneasy condition. The weight of taxation and the high prices of the necessities of life have unsettled this class and predisposed it to excitement. Then, again, among men of ardent moral convictions, but unbalanced in judgment—enthusiasts by constitution—there is a readiness for extreme measures, for hazardous experiments, in even a greater degree than usual. In the past years, seeing the wonderful results of the past years, have become giddy, and say, "Now is the time to make over the world in conformity to the requirements of divine justice; now is the time to extirpate wrong and to usher in the glorious reign of truth and love;" while all the time the work of individual regeneration, that lies at the foundation of national progress, is neglected or overlooked.

These are the circumstances and elements, or some of them, that predispose to violent political excitements, and that offer opportunities and inducements for demagogical appeals. But, in opposition to these, all the necessities of social, North and South, plead for sane and economical measures, and urge the allaying of excitement and passion. At the North, industry must become settled and the relations of society be readjusted. Local affairs must receive attention, and local administration be purified, and burdens of local taxation be lightened. In the South, there are four millions of blacks, suddenly raised to citizenship, but destitute of all the qualifications and requirements for their new situation except that of an instinctive devotion to the Union—sufficient for great crises like that through which we have just passed, but not good for everyday use.

In the same section there is nearly or quite the same number of whites, perhaps more difficult to deal with, because, while equally illiterate with the blacks, they are animated by the inveterate prejudices against the new order of things that belong to ignorant dislike. Then there is the class who have heretofore lived on the proceeds of slave labor—in which class is to be found nearly the whole of the education of the South—numbering three or four millions more, also prejudiced, naturally discontented, and unsettled. This is the class active in the Rebellion, but towards whom both mercy and policy dictate a course calculated to soothe and to interest in the experiment of free society.

These bare allusions to the elements of political disturbance and possible convulsion, and to the circumstances which render moderation desirable, are sufficient to enforce the necessity of prudence and forethought in the selection of a new administration.

Suppose a man constitutionally an agitator—narrow and impracticable and bigoted—say like Wade, of Ohio, to be put in nomination by the Republicans. His nomination would be the signal for a rallying of all the wild, disorderly, and fanatical elements in the community. Does any man of reflection imagine that the election of such a man would not be at the expense of the best interests of the country? It would mean the indefinite continuance of the excitement and restlessness that now pervade the body politic—the intensifying of political and sectional animosities. Wade and his school of Republicans having declared in favor of the division of the States of the late slave holders, as a bid for the negro vote, now we see from a recent speech at Lawrence, go further, and say—

"Congress, which has done so much for the slave, cannot quietly regard the terrible distinction which exists between the laborer and the employer. Property must be divided, and a more equal distribution must be wrought out. If your dull heads," he said, "can't understand this, the women will, and canvassers upon the eve of an election will tell the laborers what they will do for them. Men should not be compelled to labor until life is worn out and being a curse, nor can it always be the case here, where every man is a capitalist to a certain extent. These inequalities are not felt as they are in the East. Every man, then, who was subjected to a capitalist, ought to have him and get two hours nearer sundown forthwith. Mr. Wade pledged himself to advocate boldly and persistently the natural rights of men, and produce the most important commercial results from the completion of the Pacific Road."

The report adds "he was frequently applauded," and that "Train and Covode made fiery speeches." Wade and his associates and sympathizers now openly bid for the support of the laboring element in the North, in a style that can hardly be paralleled in modern political history. "A more equal distribution of property" is the inducement held out. Such demagogues will be rebuked by the very men they appeal to, but the facts illustrate the statements just made. Butler is another of the Wade stripe of bold, unprincipled demagogues, so eager to ride that he don't care on what hobby, so he is mounted. Then there are weak, good-natured, universal favorites, who are struggling for the nomination, whose success we were about to say would be worse for the country than that of the bold, bad demagogues—for bad men will do through a weak tool what they shrink from doing openly. We won't wound their feelings by calling names, because we don't think their chances good.

Chief Justice Chase has an active party. The Chief Justice has too much dignity to appeal to the low and disorderly elements of society—too much self-respect to be a great favorite with the average working politicians.

He has to recommend him to the radicals the merit of having invented the Reconstruction scheme that is now in operation throughout the South, having suggested this Radical plan of dealing with the South in his correspondence with President Johnson during his tour in 1865. Mr. Chase has, moreover, acted towards Mr. Johnson with great courtesy and kindness, and has borne testimony to the uprightness of his character and the purity of his intention, while differing from him in policy, and this might recommend him to the Democrats and Conservatives, if he were not tainted by connection with the national bank business.

Then there is Governor Andrew, who is a possible candidate on the Republican side. His nomination would be a rebuke to the Summer-Wade party, and in the event of a machine nomination by the Democrats, would draw the support of a large body of Democratic votes. Senator Fessenden is one of the ablest and most incorruptible and wisest men in the Republican party. He has been abused by Wendell Phillips, which is a conclusive certificate of political sanity. The Constitutional amendment—a moderate and generous scheme of reconstruction—was his work, and is evidence of his statesmanlike qualities. His administration of the Treasury gave opportunity for criticism by some; but in the Senate his course in relation to matters of finance and revenue has always been sound, and he has been the acknowledged leader in all important measures of financial and political policy, and the greatest errors of the party have been on points where he has been overborne by a rampant radicalism.

Senator Morgan will also loom up as the time of the Convention approaches. He has shown great political and financial judgment, both as Governor and Senator. He endeavored to keep his party with Mr. Johnson long after almost everybody else had given it up, and though finally obliged to fall in with the aggressive policy of Congress, is constitutionally wise and prudent. At the same time he has been inflexibly true to the principles and policy advocated by the most sensible men of his party.

But the set of public opinion is undoubtedly in favor of Grant. If the Republican managers have the sense to nominate Grant, with Fessenden, or Morgan, or Andrew as Vice-President, we predict that the Democrats will fall in line. Then, with a patriotic Cabinet made up from Union Democrats and Republicans like those we have named as prominent for the Republican nomination, and with some Southern man like Orr or Brown, or both of them, the "new party" would be fairly launched. The bitter radicals and the malignant Copperheads would be driven into a natural alliance with one another, and with such fossils as Perry at the South in opposition, but without sufficient power to seriously disturb the progress of restoration and pacification.

The current events and of opinions during the coming four or five months, we predict, will leave little for the political conventions to do but to register the edicts of the popular will, unmistakably promulgated long in advance of their assembling. Another week we shall discuss the programmes under consideration among the machine Democracy, though they are not so far advanced as the Republicans in Presidential schemes. The wisest of them see that if the moderate wing of the Republicans succeed in nominating Grant, their true policy is to concur in this and help to elect the ticket.

Whatever we may think of the merits of this scheme intrinsically, it will inevitably break the machinery of both parties, and will lead immediately to that "reconstruction of politics" that the *Citizen* has been preaching for months, and which all prudent men desire to see consummated.

From Peace to War.

If this country is again to be plunged into a maelstrom of political passion—if we are to go back to strife and confiscation rather than forward to peace and prosperity, the people will not forget the good so nearly achieved, nor excuse those by whose madness the cup has been dashed from their lips. The Military Reconstruction bill was passed in defiance of the President's best efforts and those of the Democratic majority in Congress. The latter combined with the Stevens wing of the Republicans to defeat the far milder measure proposed by Senator Sherman, and thus managed to render the measure actually passed much harsher towards the Rebels than it otherwise would have been. Being passed, the President vetoed it in a message of remarkable asperity, even for him, but which exists to prove that he thoroughly comprehended and proclaimed that the power of the Military Commanders in the five Military Districts was made virtually absolute. They could not inflict the penalty of death without the President's approval; beyond that, their authority was bounded by no other limits than those of their several districts. Within those limits each was temporarily an autocrat, without qualification or rivalry.

Three months of this rule has gloriously vindicated itself. The South was never before so quiet, so free from violence and oppression. Murders and murderous assaults are almost unknown. Blacks have at length rights which whites can only assail at their own grave and imminent peril. No one is molested in person or property by the ruling power. In spite of famine and a very general deficiency of teams and implements, the people are generally at work, and are steadily improving their condition. The sufferings are fewer to-day than they were when the act was passed, and they will be still fewer two months hence. No one's property is confiscated, and the last prisoner on account of the Rebellion is out of jail. The voters are being rapidly registered, and everything is being made ready for elections in all the Rebel States, at a very early day. In short, while there are few, "outrages" reported in all the ten States under military rule than in Tennessee alone, they are all moving rapidly and prosperously towards speedy reconstruction and self-government. The impeachment project is virtually abandoned, the President more kindly regarded, and the bitterness of hate engendered by our terrible conflict fast giving way to a more generous and fraternal spirit.

Such are the auspices under which the President sees fit to challenge Congress and the people to a new trial of strength. Forgetting or ignoring his terrible lesson of last year, he says, in effect—"I will circumvent and nullify the act of Congress which my veto did not suffice to defeat." And so we are plunged into a new struggle, whereof the end is clearly foreseen, but the progress cannot fail to prove disastrous.

President Johnson is playing directly into the hands of Messrs. Butler, Stevens, Ashley, etc., whom he seems to dislike, and who certainly have no partiality for him. He is doing for them what they could not begin to do for themselves. If the result shall be his impeachment and deposition, he will have mainly to blame his own folly in having lent a willing ear to the worst advisers who ever misguided a ruler or scourged a nation.

General Grant and the Rallying Point of the Republican Power.

Certain citizens of Virginia recently wrote a letter to John Minor Botts and some other party men and politicians in that region, urging good reasons why the people of the State should not be divided by arbitrary political lines for the benefit of small demagogues. The letter of these gentlemen indicates that they perceive a remedy for the evil. They use these words—"For ourselves we indulge the hope that the great soldier who commands the enthusiastic attachment of his own section and the undivided respect of ours, may be the instrument under God of overthrowing the despotism of party, of uniting all our people, and of restoring those fraternal relations which ought to exist among citizens of a common country." By these words we may perceive that there is more wisdom in the Old Dominion than comes to the surface in its party struggles. We may see that the men in Virginia capable of really weighing the present trouble, and of perceiving the only safe way out of it, are not numbered or named among party leaders, have only an individuality as part of the great popular mass, and keep to private life. No man recognized outside of Virginia as a prominent politician could have seen the mischief so clearly or have described it so well. Party leaders there are last in party struggles. To them there is nothing else but party. But this letter of the citizens of Louisiana (published in last Friday's *Herald*), rising like an emanation from the general thought of the section, shows that the popular mind is sound and healthy.

Over the whole country it is the same as in Virginia. Party strife is the grand evil of the hour. Faction rife and ruin. Faction in Congress carries a certain law, and faction outside prevents its enforcement. Congressional faction thus finds its hands strengthened, goes further, and continued opposition only serves to furnish it with excuses for newer and greater aggression and encroachment. Thus far are tossed from faction to faction; and who shall say where they will land? It is the South that suffers to-day; but if we permit this to go on against the South, shall we not make the precedent on which future factions will condemn us also? Robespierre are typical figures in history, and they die always on the guillotines that they have made part of the law. How shall we stop this war of factions? History tells us there is but one way. To throw off the tyranny of party the people must have a nucleus for the gathering of their strength. They must rally round the person of some great leader—some man of power, courage, fidelity—and, combining on him, give him the strength and confidence to put down the factions. By making Cincinnatus dictator the Romans saved the State. Later Romans would have saved it again if they had done the same by Cæsar before the factions had time to kill him. Nations must profit by such lessons. The only chance for the American people to stay the ruinous war of faction is to gather around Grant and confide in him the strength and the power to pacify and restore the nation. In Virginia the people see this as the obvious fact. Elsewhere it is seen also, and as this idea comes to prevail and the people act on it through the ballot-box, we shall have satisfactorily solved the great problem of our national troubles.

Political Consensus—President Johnson and Mr. Disraeli.

Mr. Lowe, in his late speech upon the Reform question—one of the ablest of the many able speeches which have been delivered upon the subject during the present session—put this question to the House of Commons—"What can have induced the conservative party of England to enter into this ruinous competition to abandon the most useful and honorable position they held of defending the traditions of this country and its existing institutions, and altering them even in minor matters, to say nothing of measures of vast and unspeakable importance? What can have made this wonderful change?"

The answer, supposing any leader of the Conservative party had undertaken to make one, would have been simple. The change which Mr. Lowe condemned, in language glowing with fire and animation, but steeped in bitterness and gall, has no other excuse to be offered for it than the pressure of public opinion and the necessities of the times. Undoubtedly the revolution which a few short months have worked in the views and sentiments of the Conservative party is astonishing. No one could have anticipated it, no one was prepared for it. It is unexampled in the history of English parties. Last year a bill was brought in by the Russell-Gladstone Government reducing the suffrage in boroughs from ten pounds to seven pounds. The opposite party threw themselves against this measure, because it was too radical and sweeping, and they succeeded in obtaining a majority in the House. They have now made themselves responsible, not for a £7 franchise, but for one without any limitations of value whatever. Under their Reform bill, any householder may vote, except such as may be unable to pay rates through poverty. Lodgers are also admitted to the suffrage. Mr. Bright recently wished to go further than this, but if he does he has never dared to say so. The Tory party—the sturdy, old-fashioned party—the party which has always been keeping things as they were, and has cried out against all change—this is now the party of revolution. As we have on previous occasions pointed out, the metastasis is exclusively the achievement of Mr. Disraeli. He has led on his followers this session with desperate courage and determination, and he seems to have felt that it had fallen to his lot to deal with the great and final crisis in the history of their fortunes. We do not know what the effect of his singular dexterity and audacity may be in the future, but it cannot be disputed that the old and renowned Tory party of England is dead, and that its distinguishing principles have perished with it. It finds its reward in governing the country under an altered form.

There is, however, something of greater interest and moment to us in this memorable phase of English politics, than the study of the transmutation of a famous party organization. The events to which we are referring throw into striking relief one of the main points of distinction in the management of politics in England and the United States. There are many differences, and some of them can scarcely be reckoned in our favor. Strangely as it may sound to say so, it is certain that public men in England have greater latitude allowed to them for free discussion of principles than public men in this country. They may differ with their own party without being stigmatized as traitors, and vote against the measures of their side without being accused of faithlessness or insincerity. Lord Cranbourne held a high post

in the Ministry, resigned on account of its Reform Bill, turned round upon it with characteristic acrimony and bitterness, and has ever since been the most violent and implacable opponent it has had. Yet he still sits on the same benches; he is still a member of the party. Imagine a "cane" pretending that it could eject or ostracize him! The party which attempted such intolerance and bigotry in England would cover itself with ridicule and confusion, and the people would wash their hands clean of it in twenty-four hours. These refinements of free Governments are reserved for the enjoyment of the greatest Republic in the world.

But there is a still more marked peculiarity of English political life; and that is the view which a foremost public man in that country is found to take of his duty, at times when he discovers that his personal convictions are in antagonism to those of the bulk of the people. Compare, for instance, the conduct of the President of the United States and that of M. Disraeli, under nearly similar circumstances. When these two functionaries assumed the leadership of affairs, their situation before their respective countries, in relation to public feeling, was almost identical. Mr. Johnson held very strongly to certain opinions which were obnoxious to the general community. Mr. Disraeli was in the same plight. Mr. Johnson tried by various expedients, which are too recent to need recounting, to bring the public sentiment into conformity with his own. Mr. Disraeli, by numerous speeches, in which he made no mistakes which his opponents could turn to advantage, also tried to persuade the English people out of their convictions into the adoption of his theories. Mr. Johnson failed, and did not see it. Mr. Disraeli also failed, and did see it. Both these great officials labor under the reproach of being out of accord with the true feeling of their country, and both estranged themselves from the hearts of their countrymen. Mr. Johnson may sometimes think himself hardly judged, but he has not to complain of thirty years of incessant vituperation and attack, as Disraeli may. How different was the course followed by these two men when the hour of trial came! The glory and boast of Mr. Johnson was that he stood firmly and unchangeably by his principles. Every one knows how much there is to be said for this line of conduct. A variety of phrases, which are supposed to have a manly and imposing sound, have been adapted to such occasions. We may talk of nailing colors to the mast, of going down with the ship, of not surrendering, of planting our feet upon the rock, and using a great deal more of fine language to the same effect. But to a reflective man, or a reflective people, the question will recur, whether firmness is always a duty or a virtue in a public man intrusted with the destinies of his country at a time of great difficulty and emergency. His first, his commanding obligation, is to guide the people safely through the embarrassments which surround them. The claims of "firmness" or "consistency" are slight in comparison, and there are periods when a statesman would be criminal if he did not ignore and discard a Parliament, or a military despotism; to-day it is alumnously surrounding, embracing, and defending that despotism. But a few months ago denouncing the wholesale imposition of negro suffrage by Congress upon the country, with such vehemence as if all the tender jelly of its nature would burst and scatter to the ends of the earth in sheer revulsion; this month the yielding mass has slipped and swayed, and we wake to find the *Times* denouncing the Democracy for its blind insensate hostility to negro suffrage, as a party.

Now, the colloid *Times* may thaw, dissolve, slip, sway, and flow as it chooses, but it shall not misrepresent the relation of the Democratic party to negro suffrage. It cannot with truth be said that the Democratic party is for or against negro suffrage. In its opinion the subject is not lawfully a national one; and as the Democratic party is a national party and a law-abiding party, it has not as a party formed or expressed any decision on the enlargement of the voting franchise. Democrats believe it to be a question by law in State control, and they can no more be deemed against negro suffrage than for it, or than the Republican party can be deemed against woman suffrage—still an unmoored question in Congress.

In the last National Democratic Convention, as in the last Republican Convention, neither negro suffrage nor woman suffrage was a plank in the party platform. It is, indeed, a mark of the monstrous change which has been effected in the political situation, that a question which no man broached then has now become so prominent. It is a mark, moreover, of the utter unconstitutionality of the Republican party, that this question, which but two or three years ago was not dreamed of by either of the two great political parties as one which could possibly come within the sphere either of national, or of national party, action, has now become both a party tenet to which the colloid *Times* has at last moulded itself into conformity, and also a matter which the party has agreed to withdraw unconstitutionally from the State control, where it now lawfully and legitimately resides, and to subject to Federal authority.

The columns of the *Times*, in past days, are full of able and conclusive arguments against this unconstitutionality process, which it now submits to, and consents to, and applauds. The *Times* recognizes quite as clearly as the *World* does, the facts and the logic of facts, and with the whole Democratic party it submits to them because it is powerless to prevent them. It does not consent to them. It seems to defend, apologize for or applaud them. Least of all does it surrender the stronghold because its outpost has been captured.

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Negro Suffrage and the Democratic Party.

Chemists distinguish between the two states of matter called crystalloid and colloid. The crystalloids tend to assume definite, symmetrical, crystalline forms; the colloids do nothing of the kind. They are the jellies and gums and gelatine of creation. These facts analogue in the political world. There are crystalloids in politics as there are colloids. With all possible respect, we must be permitted to say that the *Times* will never, in this world or the next, get itself classified among the crystalloids. There are no principles in accordance with which it arranges itself. Top might as well be bottom, or hind side might come before, and to this colloid it would be all the same. At one time its soft, gelatinous nature adjusts itself among the most pronounced opponents of the radical revolution. At another time, it has moulded itself into perfect harmony with the revolution, its leaders and its results. Yesterday, apart by the whole diameter of its being, at least, from military despotism; to-day it is alumnously surrounding, embracing, and defending that despotism. But a few months ago denouncing the wholesale imposition of negro suffrage by Congress upon the country, with such vehemence as if all the tender jelly of its nature would burst and scatter to the ends of the earth in sheer revulsion; this month the yielding mass has slipped and swayed, and we wake to find the *Times* denouncing the Democracy for its blind insensate hostility to negro suffrage, as a party.

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The *World* and the Democratic party have held but one opinion regarding negro suffrage. That opinion is neither for negro suffrage nor against negro suffrage as a party; for the simple reason that in their view negro suffrage cannot lawfully become a national, or a national party, question. They are opposed steadfastly to the imposition of negro suffrage upon any Southern or any Northern State by Federal legislation and power. For if anything in the constitutional law and history of our Government is established and clear, it is that each State has supreme control of the distribution of the elective franchise among its own citizens. We should mock the intelligence of our readers to cite those clauses in the Constitution, those passages in the decisions of our highest court, and those facts in the history of the country, which prove that the present position of the Democratic party has always been the position of all intelligent men of all political parties until the Republican party entered upon its unconstitutionalizing process.

Quite superfluous and unnecessary is it now deemed by that party to make changes in the Constitution according to the mode therein prescribed. Now it hesitates no longer at overriding the Constitution by party majorities through Federal legislation. But this the Democratic party has never consented to do and never will consent to do. The Democratic party would oppose just as strenuously the

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denial of the suffrage to the negroes of the United States by Federal legislation. The denial of the suffrage to the blacks would be not one whit more repulsive to the *World* than its forcible imposition upon them by Federal power. Its hostility is the same in either case, because the reason for that hostility is in either case the same. To confer the suffrage franchise or to deny it, is equally a lawless violation of the rights of all the States, each for itself, to distribute the franchise as its people elect to do. New York repels the right of Delaware to say, or have a voice in saying, how she shall apportion this trust, and California, with her Chinamen, repels the control of Florida, with or without her negroes.

If the *Times* and other Republican journals, therefore, have not determined entirely to eschew fairness and candor in political controversy, they will hereafter take pains to represent the Democratic party as opposed to the denial of negro suffrage by Federal law no less than to its imposition by Federal law.

As we have already said, the *World* and the Democratic party recognize facts and the logic of facts with quite as clear an intelligence as their opponents. They do not need to be told whether events are tending. They see. They do not need the *Times* to inform them that the Rebellion and the consequences of the Rebellion (among which, perhaps, the most direful is the unconstitutionality of a great political party, and its transformation from the odious form of a sectional party to the still more odious shape of a revolutionary party) have put ballots into the hands of all the adult male negroes of the South, which neither Federal power nor State power will hereafter be able to withdraw from their hands, even were it desirable.

This enormous change in our political dynamics nullifies any previous decision in any Northern State regarding negro suffrage, made, as all such decisions must have been made, before this monstrous change had taken place, in all the facts which have now ceased to exist. The conclusions of the New York Constitutional Convention of 1846, conferring upon our negro citizens suffrage with a property limitation, can have, and should have no control over the Constitutional Convention of 1867. All things are changed; and political wisdom then is no more likely to be wisdom now than an agriculture suited to the carboniferous flora would be likely to produce great crops from the existing vegetable world.

We express the wishes of every enlightened Democrat, therefore, when we say that it is the duty of the Constitutional Convention now in session at Albany, to submit to the people of this State (not to the Republican majority in Congress), to be voted upon, this matter of the extension of the voting franchise. They are the competent and lawful judges whether, or not, and how much or how little, the franchise shall be extended; and our political circumstances have so changed since the matter was last submitted to their decision, that there is great propriety in its being now again submitted to their revision. Indeed, it is a question of so much importance, that the will of the people of the State ought not to be prejudiced or impeded by the possible failure of the Convention to make a Constitution suited to their wants. Even if the new Constitution were to be rejected by the people, their free consideration and unbiased decision of the question of the extension of the voting franchise ought to be insured by its separate submission.

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